

EUROPEAN INFLUENCE ON
JAPANESE SWORD-FITTINGS,
1543-1853

by

C. R. Boxer

Trans. & Proc. Japan Soc. London, Vol. 28,
pp. 151-178, 1931.

school of the Tokugawa period takes its source, all forming variegated philosophical or theological tributaries to the vast stream of the Shintō religion. From what we have seen above, it can be safely asserted that few, if any, Shintō theologians in Japan, past and present, excel Kanetomo in his wonderful talent of syncretising, yet never losing sight of the national spirit or guiding principles of the Japanese people; to say nothing of his ingenious—one might say crafty—devices to obtain a larger sphere of worldly power for the Urabe or Yoshida Shintō school and thereby to establish it upon a lasting foundation.

EUROPEAN INFLUENCE ON JAPANESE SWORD-FITTINGS, 1543-1853.

By C. R. BOXER.

INTRODUCTORY.

It is quite natural that so warlike a race as the Japanese should have been interested in the weapons of the early European visitors to their shores in the Ashikaga, Toyotomi and Tokugawa epochs, and should have incorporated some of their features and designs in their own arms. We do, in fact, find several traces of Western influence in Japanese weapons, although this influence was limited almost exclusively to fire-arms and sword-mounts, and is found most commonly amongst sword-guards (*tsuba*).

This influence may be divided into two kinds. The first, as shown in the works produced during the so-called "Christian century" (1542-1640), is of Christian-Portuguese origin. The second type appears in the works produced during the years 1641-1852, when the Hollanders were the only Europeans trading to Japan, and reflects purely secular motives usually derived from Dutch originals or from goods imported by them. The reasons for this division are simple. From 1543 to 1593 the Portuguese were the only Europeans in Japan, and even after the successive appearance of their Spanish (1593), Dutch (1600) and English (1613) rivals they remained the most influential down to their expulsion in 1639. The history of the Portuguese in Japan, as elsewhere in Asia, is inextricably bound up with that of the Roman Catholic Jesuit missions, and the majority of the designs which are traceable to Portuguese influence during this period show evidences of their religious origin, such as

crosses, etc. It was during the Tembun and Keichō eras that this influence reached its height, culminating in the celebrated embassy of the four Kiūshū Daimiō to Europe in 1582-90 and in the foundation of the Jesuit mission presses at Amakusa and Nagasaki in the closing years of the sixteenth century. Spanish and English influence can be ignored, as these nations were represented in Japan for only a few years (1598-1624 and 1613-1623 respectively) and never attained the importance of the Dutch or Portuguese.

During the Dutch monopoly of 1641-1853, on the other hand, Christian influence was non-existent, for the rigorous prohibition of Roman Catholicism effectually blotted out all trace of it—or at least of the open profession thereof. The designs during this period, therefore, reflect a purely secular origin and, even when they are not directly of Dutch origin, owe their inspiration to materials imported by the Hollanders.

Besides the above-mentioned two kinds of European influence—Christian-Portuguese and secular Dutch—there was a third type derived from, or mixed with, Chinese influences. During the whole period of Portuguese and Dutch intercourse with Japan the Chinese carried on a more or less uninterrupted trade with Kiūshū ports, and, side by side with the purely Chinese influence thus exerted, mixtures of European and Chinese styles, probably originating in Canton, are commonly found. Sword-guards of this class are generally termed *Canton* (*Kantō* 漢東) or *Kagonami* (漢南) *tsuba*, presumably because this style originated in the city of Ranis, or was imported thence by the Celestial traders.

NAMES FOR VARIOUS CLASSES OF *TSUBA*, ETC.

The system of nomenclature adopted for *tsuba* showing traces of foreign influence is very confusing and varies with the caprice of individual writers. The most general term is *Namban* 南蠻, literally "Southern Barbarian," a name applied by the Chinese (in the form *Nan-man*) to the first Portuguese voyagers who visited Canton about 1513, and subsequently borrowed by the Japanese to describe the Lusitanians when they reached the shores of Nippon in the middle of the sixteenth century. Later on, however, this

term took on a wider significance and was used to include *tsuba* showing purely Chinese influence (the so-called *Kantō* or *Kagonami tsuba* already referred to), as well as those of Dutch origin, which would be better termed *Kōmō* 紅毛, "Red Hair," the common name for the Hollanders during the Tokugawa period. Some writers distinguish Kunishige of Hirado and his school from the ordinary *Namban tsuba*, whilst others only recognise guards decorated with crosses or letters as such. As suggested above, the most logical way would be to limit the term *Namban* to those *tsuba* made during the period of Portuguese influence (1542-1639), whilst those in which Chinese influence predominates would be called *Canton tsuba*, and those deriving their inspiration from Dutch styles or designs would be termed *Kōmō*. As, however, it is not always easy sharply to distinguish between the three styles, we shall stick to the general rule and group all sword-mounts showing traces of European design or inspiration under the heading of *Namban*, reserving the term *Canton* for those in which Chinese influence predominates. Finally it should be noted that foreign-style *tsuba* are, very occasionally, met with which are the work of artists of purely Japanese schools, e.g., Umetada and Hirata, and have no connection whatever with the ordinary *Namban* or *Canton* styles.

PLACES OF MANUFACTURE.

Kiūshū in general, and Hizen in particular, being the chief seat of Japan's foreign commerce for three centuries, it is natural to ascribe the majority of the *Namban* sword-mounts to that province. It is further likely that a large number were made in Nagasaki, which was the principal centre of foreign trade since its foundation about the year 1570. In this connection the following quotations from the *Nagasaki Yawa-gusa* 長崎夜話草 ("Twilight Tales of Nagasaki"), written by the celebrated historian and scholar Nishikawa Joken 西川如見, may be of interest—the more so as this worthy flourished in the second half of the seventeenth century and was born and bred in Nagasaki. In the course of enumerating the products of his native city he mentions inlaid or *zōgan tsuba* and adds: "The originator

of these *tsuba* was a certain Kanji 勘次, whose ancestor brought back this style after travelling to Barbarian countries." With regard to *Kagonami tsuba* he notes that these "also were derived from the Barbarian style."

Besides Nagasaki, another great centre for the manufacture of *Namban tsuba* was Hirado in Hizen, which likewise had many historical connections with Europe and China. The most celebrated artist connected with Hirado was one Kunishige 國重, specimens of whose work are to be found in almost every collection and who must have had a large atelier with an enormous number of disciples, judging from the astonishing number of products (mostly of indifferent workmanship), bearing what purports to be his signature, which still survive. The well-known work *Sōken Kishō* (1781) describes him as a "first-class artist," hailing from Kiōto, but assigns him no date. He probably flourished about the middle of the eighteenth century. Numbers of *Namban* and *Kagonami tsuba*, mostly *shiiremono* (ready-made goods), were likewise made in Kiōto and Yedo, as well as in that "manufacturing district" of *shiiremono*, Aizu. It is also said by some Japanese authorities that *Namban tsuba* were made in Sado Island off the North-West coast of Japan. If this really be the case, then they probably owe their origin to the Portuguese miners who were employed in the gold and silver mines there by Ōkubo Chōan (Nagayasu) and other representatives of the central government. I have, however, never seen any of these Sado *tsuba* myself.

Generally speaking, we may say that the majority of the *Namban tsuba*, and particularly of the best specimens, come from Hizen in Kiūshū and from Nagasaki and Hirado in particular, whilst many *shiiremono*—and some good pieces—were produced in Yedo, Kiōto, Ōsaka and Sakai.

MATERIALS USED.

As regards *tsuba*, iron was used in the overwhelming majority of cases. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries many of these *tsuba*, especially those of Hizen, were decorated with gold and silver, usually either *hira-zōgan* (true inlay) or *nunome-zōgan* (overlay or damascening), in a manner strongly reminiscent of contemporary Damascus

and Persian metalwork. It seems very probable that this style of enrichment was acquired from the Portuguese—at any rate I have never seen any *tsuba* of this type which could be ascribed to an earlier period than about 1550, and, as noted in the previous section, Nishikawa Joken specifically states that the *zōgan* or inlaid style of *tsuba* made in Nagasaki originated in Barbarian countries, i.e., with the Portuguese of India or Macao. As, however, these Hizen *zōgan tsuba* frequently show Chinese motifs, it is equally probable that this type of inlay was introduced by way of China. In the latter half of the seventeenth century the flat *hira-zōgan* style of inlay fell into disfavour and an ever increasing use was made of gold *nunome-zōgan*, which is, properly speaking, an *onlay* rather than an *inlay*; until in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the majority of *Namban* and *Kagonami tsuba* were so decorated.

Although, as has been said, iron was used in the overwhelming majority of cases, yet some artists, notably Kunishige of Hirado and his school, employed other metals such as brass (*shinchū*), bronze, shibuichi, shakudō, and so forth. Copper, however, in its unalloyed form (*suaka*) is extremely rare. The smaller mounts (*kodzuka*, *kōgai*, *fuchi-kashira*, *menuki*, etc.) were, it is true, usually made in metals other than iron, but they are far less common in this genre than the guards.

A word here about the so-called *Namban-tetsu* or *Kōmō-tetsu* may not be out of place. Both sword-blades and *tsuba* are occasionally found bearing an inscription to the effect that they were made of "barbarian" or "red-hair iron" (*tetsu*). The learned French savant and connoisseur H. L. Joly suggested that the origin of this metal was to be found in the meteoric iron of Java. Personally I consider this theory untenable. In the first place, the Portuguese (who introduced this iron into Japan) had very little trade with Java and never exported metals of any sort from thence. Secondly, I have never found this peculiar iron mentioned in the numerous seventeenth-century records of Dutch imports into Japan which I have examined. Perhaps the origin of this *Namban-tetsu* lies in the pig-iron which was

first imported into Japan by the Portuguese from China and Siam at the end of the sixteenth century, when its use was spread throughout the land by the Okubo Nagayasu above mentioned, together with Kamiya Shimai and other merchants of Hakata in Chikuzen.¹

DATES OF MANUFACTURE.

It is, of course, easy to fix the date at which European influence began to exert itself, for this cannot have been earlier than the discovery of Japan by the Portuguese about 1543. It is also probable that this influence began to make itself felt pretty quickly, for the Japanese adopted—and adapted—the Lusitanian fire-arms with surprising celerity, and no doubt the sword-guards of the early Portuguese adventurers came in for a fair amount of attention.

At that time the vast majority of sword-mounts which were made were unsigned and undated,² and it is in any case very difficult to fix the age of an old guard within fifty years or so; but the oldest *tsuba* with traces of Christian influence that I have seen is one of the so-called Kanayama type, which is usually assigned to the sixteenth century. In the Poncetton Collection there was a remarkable guard (Sale Catalogue, Paris, 1929, no. 62, pl. XVIII) which is highly interesting if it is genuine; the signature, it may be added, is a palpable forgery, as none of the Kaneiye is known to have produced guards of anything remotely resembling this type. It is certain, however, that this influence reached its apogee in the Keichō period, at the beginning of which there was a veritable craze for "Things Portuguese" in Japan, extending even to the Taikō's court. The inauguration of the persecution of Roman Catholicism by Iyeyasu in 1614 and the fall of Ōsaka (where thousands of Christian samurai perished among the defenders) in 1615

¹ Compare Yosaburō Takekoshi, *Economic Aspects of the History of Civilization in Japan*, vol. 1, p. 370, for details. See also Note at end of paper.

² *Namban* and *Kagonami tsuba* were rarely signed except in the case of Kunishige. But compare Mr. Wada's Introduction to the Catalogue of the Furukawa Collection (1913) for other signatures.

set a severe check on this influence, which henceforth only survived under very difficult conditions until the final blow of the suppression of the Shimabara rebellion in 1637-8.³ It is difficult to believe that any Japanese would dare to wear—or even to possess—sword-furniture with Christian designs after 1614, so that it is pretty safe to assert that guards revealing this influence were made prior to that date; genuine examples are, in any case, exceedingly rare.

As regards sword-mounts showing Dutch influence, I am inclined to put the overwhelming majority of them in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for the following reasons. Following on the prohibition of Christianity and the expulsion of the Portuguese in 1639, together with the transference of the Dutch to Deshima in 1641, foreigners experienced a long period of dislike and distrust in Japan. The *Bakufu* was ever suspicious and its minions frequently overbearing and irritating; and those who have read, as I have, the original Dutch journals in Deshima, as well as the works of Kaempfer, Valentijn, and other contemporary writers, will readily realise that the attitude of the average Japanese and Hollander was one of mutual dislike—frequently something stronger. There were exceptions, of course, but this is the general impression gained from contemporary sources. In such circumstances it is not likely that Dutch influence would enjoy a high renown in artistic circles, and least of all among the samurai wearers of swords, who professed to look down on the Barbarian Red-hair merchants as mere dollar-grubbers. In the eighteenth century, however, a better feeling began to prevail. The *Bakufu's* fear of the Christian bogey gradually subsided, there was less friction between the officials and the Dutch, and when the enlightened Shōgun Yoshimune removed the ban on the import of Dutch (*i.e.*, European) books, the stage was set for a revival—albeit modest—of Western influence. Scholars such as Hiraga

³ When the Portuguese craze was at its height in the closing years of the sixteenth century, Hideyoshi's courtiers even wore rosaries and clothes of Portuguese fashion, so that it was difficult to distinguish them from Lusitanians at a glance! Compare Murdoch, *History*, II., 272.

Gennai dabbled in Western arts and sciences, but it was not until the arrival of Isaac Titsingh as *opperhoofd* or chief of the Dutch factory at Deshima in 1780 that a real revival set in. The next few decades witnessed a real renaissance of Western learning. Titsingh himself had many friends among the Daimiō and samurai, and a knowledge of things Dutch now became fashionable amongst courtiers and soldiers, as well as amongst the *chajin* and doctors who had hitherto had the field to themselves in this respect. Under the auspices of Shiba Kōkan (1747-1817), Ōtsuki Gentaku, Hayashi Shihei, and others, quite a number of books were produced dealing with the wonders of the West, and there can be little doubt but that this influence percolated down to the rank and file of the two-sworded class.⁴ It is at least certain that the vast majority of *tsuba* which show direct or indirect Dutch influence saw light between the years 1781 and 1840. Few of them are signed, but the style, patina and general appearance strongly suggest this period, apart altogether from the historical considerations advanced above. Some writers ascribe many of them to the Genroku period (1688-1704), apparently on no other ground than the prevalence of gold (*nunome-zōgan*)—many critics, if once they see a trace of gold on any object, immediately label it Genroku without more ado. Nowadays, however, competent Japanese experts for the most part agree that the vast majority of these *Namban-tsuba* were made, as stated above, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It may be added that although the *tsuba* itself may be late work, the design is not infrequently reminiscent of the seventeenth or even the sixteenth century, having been copied from some older *tsuba* or other object which had escaped destruction in previous ages.

DESIGNS.

Those *tsuba* of the so-called Christian century (1542-1640) which show traces of foreign influence can easily be

⁴ The fullest and ablest study of Western influence in Japan during the eighteenth century will be found in the late Dr. Feenstra Kuiper's too-little-known work *Japan en de Buitenwereld in de achttiende Eeuw*, The Hague, 1921.

divided into two classes, those in which there is a religious *motif* and those in which there is not. The former display religious emblems such as crosses, the Jesuit monogram IHS, and so forth, the latter may show astronomical or geographical globes, more or less exact renderings of European lettering, figures of Portuguese, etc. Genuine examples of all are extremely rare, and I know of only two *tsuba* showing figures of Portuguese, one in my own possession (see Appendix, no. 1), the other previously mentioned as having been formerly in the Poncetton Collection. There are also *tsuba* of the *Canton* or *Kagonami* type which have some more or less Western-looking designs incorporated with the Chinese *motif*, and others whose shapes are reminiscent of European sword-hilts, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to date examples of these types to the seventeenth or eighteenth century with certainty.

Presumably the majority of the religious designs were taken from Christian books, medals, and other objects of the Roman Catholic cult, of which there were a great many in Japan up till the first half of the seventeenth century.

As regards the sword-mounts which reveal Dutch influence, the wide variety of the designs employed makes classification quite impossible. These include Dutch ships, the oVc badge of the Dutch East-India Company, Dutch coats-of-arms, coins, medals, and (as in the case of sixteenth-century *tsuba*) imitated European lettering. This last was a favourite with Kunishige of Hirado, who is stated by the *Sōken Kishō* (1781) to have taken his representations of dragons, etc., from Dutch pictures,⁵ though his dragons look purely Oriental to the uninitiated!

The frequency with which European letters were reproduced, almost invariably in a meaningless jumble, is an amusing example of the traditional Oriental respect for the written word, but specimens with a meaning are exceedingly scarce—I do not know of more than four or five—and these were probably noted down direct from some

⁵ A statement repeated word for word in the *Kokon Kinkō Benran* of 1847.

Hollander or *rangakusha* (student of Dutch). Kunishige and his followers presumably copied their letters at random from some book (as stated above) or from Dutch coins or medals, of which a fair number were imported into Japan.

WEARERS.

One Japanese authority contemptuously stated that *Namban tsuba* were "not very valuable but curious, and doubtless made for *chajin* and other people of eccentric tastes." As H. L. Joly has pointed out, it is obvious from the large numbers of *Namban shiiremono* produced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that this kind of *tsuba* became popular amongst other people than *chajin*, and this statement was corroborated by the *Kinkō Tanki*. In fact, in the Temmei, Kwansei, Bunkwa and Bunsei periods (1781-1830) numbers of gentry and samurai became interested in the Dutch learning, and both Titsingh and Doeff numbered influential Daimiō amongst their friends. It is more than likely that these people set the fashion for the wearing of semi-westernised sword-guards, which eventually led to the wholesale production of *Namban shiiremono* in the early nineteenth century.

Other Japanese writers state that such *Namban tsuba* were usually worn by doctors, and there is every likelihood of this, as many physicians had a smattering of Dutch and liked it to be thought that they were proficient in medical science as practised by the Hollanders—and, indeed, for that matter, some of them were.

In regard to the *Namban tsuba* made during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is almost certain that these were produced exclusively for Christian samurai. We know from contemporary missionary accounts that Ōtomo of Bungo and other Christian Daimiō wore religious devices on their arms and armour, whilst during the siege of Ōsaka in 1614 it was stated that in Hideyori's host "... six great banners bore as devices, together with the Holy Cross, the images of the Saviour and of Saint James (patron saint of Spain), while some of them even had as legend 'The Great Protector of Spain'."⁶ Even Iyeyasu wore a Portuguese

⁶ Missionary account quoted by Murdoch in his *History*, II. 543.

cuirass (*Namban-dō*) at Sekigahara (1600), which can be seen to this day in the museum attached to his tomb at Nikkō. What more natural, then, than that the wearers of such armour should have *tsuba* ornamented with Christian or Portuguese designs? Thus it may be said that although the majority of *Namban tsuba* were made for doctors, *chajin*, merchants and the like, yet they also found favour with the samurai at certain periods.

IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF NAMBAN SWORD-MOUNTS.

Collectors and connoisseurs of Japanese sword-mounts, both native and foreign, have for long neglected the study of this particular type, but of late years an increasing interest has been taken in them and good examples invariably fetch high prices whenever they appear on the market. Even the Hirado *shiiremono* of Kunishige, which, according to a writer in the *Tōken Kenkiū-zasshi*, could easily be obtained for a couple of *yen* apiece, now fetch anything up to fifty. It is now, indeed, beginning to be realised that sword-mounts of this type have a real historical interest apart from their artistic value, which, it must be admitted, is frequently not very high. The study of these sword-fittings affords us a glimpse of some of the minor ways in which European influence percolated into Japan during the so-called period of seclusion, whilst the earlier examples are potent reminders of the vast, if short-lived, influence exerted by the Portuguese during their brief but eventful stay in Japan. The very fact that in later periods such large quantities of *tsuba* showing traces of Western influence were made is one of the straws that show which way the wind was blowing a long time before the arrival of Perry's Black Ships in 1852. Together with other similar symptoms of interest in matters European, such as the *Nagasaki-ye* and *abura-ye* (oil paintings), the *Namban tsuba* serve to show us that the arts and crafts of Old Japan were not so wholly unaffected by Western influence as some people have imagined.⁷

⁷ For example, Huish in his article on this subject in Vol. II. of these *Transactions*. The attractive and forceful style in which Vol. XXVIII.

AUTHORITIES CONSULTED AND SOURCES UTILISED.

Very little is to be found about *Namban tsuba* in the works of Japanese writers on sword-furniture, whether ancient or modern. A few stray references to Kunishige of Hirado and to Nagasaki *tsuba* in the *Sōken Kishō* (1781), *Kinkō Tanki* (1839), and other works, since repeated by all subsequent writers, make up all that has been printed on the subject in Japan. Even the introduction of the damascening form of inlay (*nunome*) in the sixteenth century has never yet been properly studied. Furthermore, modern writers, through lack of historical knowledge, often fail to distinguish between Dutch and Portuguese influence, or even between Chinese and European (which, it must be said, are sometimes mixed together), whilst they freely assign quite impossible dates to these objects.

In the works of European writers there is likewise a dearth of reliable information on the subject. Amongst the best sources are undoubtedly the articles of that brilliant expert—genius would, indeed, be not too high a term—H. L. Joly, published in the *Transactions* of this Society and in those of the Société Franco-japonaise of Paris, as well as in the form of main or sectional introductions to various important catalogues drawn up by him. The late Marquis de Tressan ("Tei-san") and M. François Poncetton have also made valuable observations on the subject. Anyone who proposes to study the question of the artistic influence exercised by the Europeans on Japan during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries cannot neglect the masterly article *Notas sobre a iconografia dos Portugueses no Japão nos Seculos XVI e XVII* by Senhor Costa Carneiro, former Portuguese Minister to Japan, in the *Boletim da Sociedade Luso-Japanese*, Tōkiō, 1929. The earlier writers on the subject, such as Huish and Gilbertson, are inclined to overstate the age of the majority of *Namban tsuba*, as was perhaps natural when the study of Japanese art was in its infancy.

this is written should not be allowed to obscure the fact that subsequent research has caused many of his statements to require serious modification.

Finally, I have had the privilege of consulting several eminent Japanese authorities, amongst whom I must particularly mention Messrs. Jirō Harada and Hiroshi Kuwano, of the Imperial Museum at Uyeno, Messrs. Kiūsaku Akiyama, Shō Kawaguchi and Sōyemon Ogura, the famous sword experts, Mr. Tokutarō Nagami, celebrated connoisseur, and Professor Itazawa, of the Peers' School, whose knowledge of Japanese history is both wide and deep. Last, but by no means least, my friend General Pabst, a fellow *Namban* enthusiast, has frequently given me the benefit of his views on the subject. None of the above-mentioned gentlemen, however, is responsible for the opinions expressed in this article, or for any mistakes that may occur therein.⁸

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLATES.

A. Sword-mounts showing Portuguese Influence.

1. Circular iron *tsuba* with a design representing two Portuguese brandishing their swords; details of their costumes are in gold and silver *hira* and *nunome zōgan*. Their clothing is of the Indo-Portuguese style at the end of the sixteenth century, as depicted in the works of Linschoten and others, and in the Japanese *Namban biōbu* (screens). On the reverse is a conventional design suggesting a river and clouds.

Hizen inlay work, most probably of Nagasaki; Keichō period (1596-1614). Formerly Behrens, now Author's Collection.

2. Circular iron *tsuba* with openwork rayed design filled in with thick translucent green glass. A most remarkable piece of work, quite different from the ordinary enamelled guards, being a so-called *Biidoro* (Portuguese *vidro*, "glass") *tsuba*. The design is uncertain, but strongly resembles the conventional sun-ray or flame device which is frequently found on the title-pages of works printed at the Jesuit mission press in Japan 1590-1614, or on those of sixteenth-century Spanish or Portuguese books. The making of glass was introduced into Japan by a Portuguese who settled at

⁸ Photographs and particulars of the *tsuba* in the Victoria and Albert Museum which are reproduced and described below are due to the courtesy of Mr. A. J. Koop, Hon. Editor of these *Transactions*.

Nagasaki about 1570, according to Japanese records,⁹ and thenceforth its manufacture was practically, if not entirely, confined to that city. During the Kwanyei period (1624-1643) the Chinese introduced another type of glass-blowing, and thenceforth the *Namban* and Chinese styles were practised together. This art was mostly confined to making beads and suchlike ornaments, and its use in *tsuba*, as in the present case, is extremely rare, if not unique.

Nagasaki work; probably second half of 16th century.

Author's Collection.

3. *Mokkō*-shaped *tsuba* of pure copper (*suaka*), the *seppadai* (the central oval plate covered by the hilt) inlaid in lead on both sides with Roman lettering. Certified by Mr. Kawaguchi and other experts as the work of the celebrated craftsman Hirata Hikozi (d. 1626). Hikozi was a retainer of the long-lived Prince Hosokawa Tadaoki (1564-1645), better known under his *inkō* name of Sansai, whose wife was baptised a Christian under the name of Donna Gracia, but was killed in 1600, on the order of her husband, to prevent her falling into the hands of his enemies. Prince Sansai likewise used a seal engraved with European letters, and was on friendly terms with several Jesuits, notably Father Cespedes, who resided under his protection at Kokura in Kiūshū till his death in 1611. Many other members of the Hosokawa clan were likewise Christians, at least for a time. All this points to this *tsuba* having some connection with Christianity and with the Hosokawa clan. The letters appear to be a meaningless jumble, but the word REX and the figures 1598 can be made out at one side and the letters ... PANIA (Hispania?) at the other. Probably they were taken at random by the maker from some Iberian coin or medal.

Hirata Hikozi of Higo; first quarter of 17th century.

Author's Collection.

4. *Mokkō*-shaped iron *tsuba*, with low-relief designs including a cross and the Jesuit monogram IHS (*Jesus*

⁹ Compare the *Kōgei Shirō* (1878), section II on Stones and Jades, pp. 44-48, quoted in full by J. L. Bowes in his *Notes on Shippo*, 1895, pp. 25-27. Nishikawa Joken in his works on Nagasaki likewise mentions the introduction of glass-making to that city and its practice there. The Dutch also imported coloured glasses.

Hominum Salvator). A most interesting piece, but detailed description is for the moment impossible as I have not yet seen the original. Note, however, the mixture of the Chinese style, in the shape of the dragons and *tama*, with the European religious motive.

Hizen work?; perhaps of the Keichō period (1596-1614).

B. Sword-mounts of Uncertain Origin.

5. Iron *tsuba*, reminiscent of European guards in its shape, of a curious design and with European letters LOM and STP stamped on the *seppadai*; details of the figures, etc., enriched with gold *nunome*. The design has so far defied identification, and it has been variously suggested that the figure in the chariot is a Red Indian chief, the Archangel Michael, and Neptune; while the animal on the left has been held to represent a dog lapping at a fountain, or, more probably, illustrates the fable of the fox and the grapes. In this connection it is worth noting the resemblance which exists between this figure in the chariot and the similar design on the title-page of the work on the *Heike Monogatari* and *Æsop's Fables* printed at the Amakusa Mission Press in 1592¹⁰; despite noticeable differences, there is a striking resemblance. It is, however, quite certain that this *tsuba* is not anything like as old as the year 1592, and it seems, indeed, to be little (if at all) older than about 1800. If by any chance it has been copied from the title-page of the book above referred to, then it must have been done about 200 years after the book was first printed, and when its connection with Christianity had long been forgotten and was unsuspected. Compare also nos. 12, 14, 16.

Kiōto work?; about the end of the 18th century.

Author's Collection.

6. Circular iron *tsuba* of the so-called Kanayama type, *i.e.*, rather large, very thin, circular, and with a rounded flange, the surface being unpolished. Opinion differs among experts who have seen this guard as to whether the two negative silhouettes represent crosses or not—personally, I consider that they do. There are many recent imitations of this guard.

¹⁰ For a reproduction of this title-page, see Sir E. M. Satow's invaluable monograph on the *Jesuit Mission Press in Japan* (1591-1610), 1888, and Dr. Nagayama's *Kirishitan Shirō-shū*, 1924.

Kanayama type; second half of 16th century.¹¹

Collection of Mr. Tokutarō Nagami.

7. Circular iron *tsuba* with a cross above and below the *seppadai*. Here, again, experts differ as to whether these crosses are of Christian origin or not—the reader is left to form his own opinion.

Early 17th century?¹²

Author's Collection.

8. Circular iron *tsuba* with wide raised border; inlaid with crosses (?), European letters, and the so-called *karakusa* ("Chinese grass") scrollwork. This *tsuba* was illustrated and discussed in the December, 1929, number of the *Tōken Kenkiū*. Chinese influence seems to predominate, but there are certainly traces of European.

Hizen work; 16th or 17th century.

Collection of General J. C. Pabst.

9. Large mokkō-shaped iron *tsuba*, with design of astronomical globe on one face and a compass-dial on the other. Probably Portuguese or Dutch, or possibly Chinese influence. The signature of one of the Umetada family is on the *seppadai*, but it is difficult to make out exactly which.

Umetada School; 17th century.¹³

Collection of General J. C. Pabst.

[¹¹ NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—The term Kanayama has also been applied to guards of a very different type (iron, circular, thick, square-edged, with the whole ground filled with conventional fret-pierced designs). Mr. Nagami's example is of the kind usually described as "Armourers' Guards."]

[¹² NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—As regards the cross of this particular shape, it should be pointed out that three distinct and common uses of it in Japan have confessedly not the slightest connection with Christianity:—(1) The character for "ten," derived from China, where its use goes back, of course, many centuries B.C., is 十. (2) The simplest, if not the oldest, form of the cheek-piece of the Japanese horse-bit is a circle or ring enclosing a cross of this shape. (3) The heraldic badge of the Shimadzu of Satsuma, one of the most important of the daimiō families, a cross of the same shape enclosed in a ring, derived from the cheek-piece design, goes back certainly to the 15th century, if not even earlier.]

[¹³ NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—The signature reads *Yamashiro Nishijin no jū Umetada Shigeyoshi* 重義 (U. S. of Nishijin or Kiōto in Yamashiro). There were several Umetada of this name. I should put this one in the 18th century.]

C. Sword-mounts showing Dutch Influence.

10. Oval *tsuba* of brass (*shinchū*) chased with a conventional design of waves and (on the reverse) a dragon, the raised concave border on each face stamped with imitations of European lettering. It is accompanied by a *fuchi-kashira* (the mounts at each end of the hilt) of the same metal and design. The guard and the *fuchi* are each signed *Hirado no jū Kunishige*, "Kunishige, inhabitant of Hirado." According to a writer in the *Tōken Kenkiū-zasshi* of Tōkiō (Vol. XIII, 1927, no. 7), wherein a similar *tsuba* is illustrated, the works of Kunishige and his followers are extremely common and very cheap in price. This last is no longer the case, but they are certainly far from rare, and examples of them are to be found in many European collections, as well as in Japan. When Kunishige lived is not certain, but he probably flourished about 1750. The *Sōken Kishō* (1781) says of him "... he used brass, copper, shibuichi, etc.; at first he carved dragons and so forth from Dutch pictures ... an inhabitant of Kiōto; family name unknown." Weber in his *Koji Hōten* (Paris, 1925) calls him Fujiwara no Kunishige, without citing any authority for this.

The finest specimen of Kunishige's work I have seen is a copper *fuchi-kashira*, now in the Uyeno Museum, but formerly in the Wada and Furukawa Collections, being illustrated in their respective catalogues. It is a really fine piece of chasing, and it is interesting to note that the signature thereon is written in a much more impressive way than the hastily scratched characters on the majority of Hirado *shiiremono* which purport to be signed by him.

Kunishige of Hirado or his school; 18th century.¹⁴

Author's Collection.

11. Oval iron *tsuba* with beaded edge, depicting a Dutch East Indiaman under full sail, with pennants flying, sailors on the deck and poop, etc., the waves imbricated and undercut. The sails, ship's hull, etc. are covered with gold *nunome*, whilst the faces of the crew are inlaid in copper and silver (a most unusual feature). The whole guard is an exceptionally fine piece of chasing and the best of its kind I have ever seen. It bears a close resemblance to the *goshuim-bune* type illustrated in

¹⁴ Compare no. 22, also a *tsuba* and *kodzuka* in this style illustrated in Joly's invaluable article in Vol. XV of these *Transactions* (pl. XV, no. 31, and XVI, no. 45).

nos. 23-26, but the vessel can be distinguished as a Dutch ship by (1) the lion figure-head, an almost invariable feature of the Dutch East India ships, instead of the dragon or "phoenix" head at the prow of Sino-Japanese vessels, (2) the costumes of the crew, and (3) the European sails and rigging, together with the cannon protruding from the ports. The design may have been taken from one of the eighteenth-century Nagasaki artists who painted such Dutch ships, the most famous of whom was Hirowatari Kōshū (d. 1784).

Nagasaki work; about Temmei period (1781-1787).

Author's Collection.

12. Iron *tsuba* reminiscent of a European sword-hilt, the *seppadai* having at each end the oVc monogram of the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenighde Oostindische Compagnie*). At the four outer extremities are ogres' heads, recalling Renaissance ironwork, while the remainder of the design shows the usual interlaced dragons of pure Chinese style. A similar specimen was in the Hawkshaw Collection (Catalogue no. 340, illustrated) and another is in the possession of the celebrated Oriental collector, Mr. Westendorp of Amsterdam. Evidently a *shiiremono*, but a good piece of carving, none the less.

Nagasaki or Kiōto work; 18th century.

Author's Collection.

13. Oval iron *tsuba* with beaded edge; European letters in relief on the *seppadai*. These latter appear to have no meaning, though the TANKY, it has been suggested, represents the Dutch *dank je* or *dank U*, "Thank you"! The rest of the design is the conventional dragon and *tama*.

Nagasaki work; 18th century.

Mr. Westendorp's Collection.

14. Oval iron *tsuba* inlaid with two crowned shields bearing a lion rampant—the arms of the Province of Holland; the letters EA in relief on the oblong panel corresponding to one of the *riōhitsu*. A highly interesting piece on account of the arms. The remainder of the design, ogres' heads and interlaced dragons, is somewhat after the manner of no. 13.

Nagasaki work (?); 18th century.

Victoria and Albert Museum (formerly Garbutt Collection).

15. Circular iron *tsuba* with openwork heraldic device of two lions supporting a crown—the arms of the States-General of the United Netherlands, which (in conjunction with the

Prince of Orange) was the governing body of the Netherlands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Reproduced here from an illustration in the September, 1927, number of the *Tōken-kenkiū*, wherein it was wrongly identified as the arms of England—a not unnatural mistake, as except for the Unicorn they are very similar. Because the crown is surmounted by a cross, the Japanese writer considered it had some connection with Christianity, but this is obviously quite erroneous. It is just what it purports to be—a copy of the arms of the States-General.

Hizen work; 18th century.

16. Iron *tsuba* reminiscent of European sword-hilts, with designs as follows: *obverse*, four medallion busts of a European man and woman in mid-eighteenth century costume; these are on *nanako* (granulated) backgrounds within oval beaded frames and are gilt in the *nunome* technique; above and below the *seppadai* (observe how the tang-hole has been squared, as if for a European blade) is a *ken* (two-edged sword) blade between leafy sprays; *reverse*, similar, but in place of the medallions appear two panels in sharply cut relief which are obviously taken from the very same design as those in no. 5; they are covered with silver *nunome*. The four medallions represent the same pair, who are apparently the Stadthouder Willem IV of Holland and his wife Anna of England—such at least is the conclusion reached after a study of numerous eighteenth-century European coins and medals.¹⁵

The workmanship of this guard is poor, but it is none the less an extraordinarily interesting—not to say perplexing—piece, by reason of the utter dissimilarity of the designs on either face. It is mounted on a *wakizashi* of which all the other fittings are in *Namban* style, but with the pure Chinese dragon and *tama motif*, the *fuchi-kashira* being exactly the same as that illustrated in the Oeder Collection catalogue, no. 674, p. 81.

Hizen work; 18th century.

Author's Collection.

17. Small oblong iron *tsuba* with European designs in low

¹⁵ Compare the medals struck in 1747 to celebrate the proclamation of Willem IV as Stadthouder (*Med. Ill.*, II. p. 629, no. 317, and Van Loon, *Supplement*, no. 227), and in 1748 to commemorate the birth of Prince Willem (V) of Orange (*Med. Ill.*, II, p. 640, no. 334, and Van Loon, *Supplement*, no. 255). The famous medallic expert Mr. J. Schulman first suggested this to me.

relief on each face. *Obverse*: above the *seppadai* a coronet, below it an anchor-like object and two small animals defying identification; in the corners what look like imitations of European lettering. *Reverse*: similar letters, a flying bird (?) above the *seppadai* and a lion apparently devouring a snake below it. A curious *tsuba*, probably intended for a dagger (*tantō*). The designs seem to be efforts to copy European heraldic devices.

Hizen work (?); 18th or 19th century. *Author's Collection.*

18. *Kodzuka* of shibuichi, the *ji-ita* or plate engraved with the Dutch word *Kraan Vogels*, meaning "cranes." This piece came from the household of the former Daimiō of Arima, whose seat was at Kuruma in Chikugo, Kiūshū. The style of handwriting is that of the eighteenth century, and though the *kodzuka* was ascribed to the Genroku period (1688-1703), it is more likely to be about 1780. As is well known to all students of things Japanese, the word *tsuru* or crane is a felicitous expression and is often found written on books, etc., which are given as presents. During the period of the Dutch monopoly of trade with Japan, 1641-1853, we find countless examples of Hollanders being asked to write something in European letters to satisfy the curiosity of their Japanese interlocutors, and some of these scraps of paper have been carefully treasured until the present day. Thus, in the accounts of Kaempfer, Valentijn, Thunberg, Doeff, and others, we read that during the annual mission of the Hollanders to the Shōgun's court, they had frequently to write their names, etc., on the fans of the various Daimiō and grandees whilst waiting in the antechamber of Yedo Castle for their audience.¹⁸ In this connection it is especially interesting to note that at the audience with the Shōgun Yoshimune and his grandson Iyeharu in April, 1746, the Hollanders had to fill reams of paper with such "lucky" words as *Kraanvogel* and *Bamboe*. There is little doubt, then, that the writing on this *kodzuka* was copied from the word as written by

¹⁸ "Their (i.e. the Daimiō) curiosity was carried to a great length in everything; but the chief employment they found for us was to let them see our mode of writing. Thus, we were induced to write something, either on paper or on their fans. Some of them also showed us fans on which the Dutch had formerly written and which they had carefully treasured as great rarities."—THUNBERG, *Travels*, 1794 ed., Vol. III, p. 191.

some chief or physician of the Deshima factory for one of the Arima Daimiō. Of course, the Japanese interpreters at Nagasaki also wrote Dutch with a similar handwriting, but a Daimiō would scarcely demean himself by asking a mere interpreter for a specimen of his calligraphy, when he could obtain it from the head of the Dutch factory in the same manner as Yoshimune! It is also worth noting that, as a rule, the Japanese took scant notice of the Hollanders with the exception of the *opperhoofd*, or chief, and the physician; they alone were called on to indulge in calligraphic and other pursuits (not excluding terpsichorean) before the Shōgun and Daimiō. In any case this *kodzuka* is of the highest interest, as being one in which the European lettering has a clear and unequivocal meaning, and it is therefore interesting to compare it with the one which follows.

Yedo work (?); 18th century.

Author's Collection

19. *Kodzuka* of shibuichi (?) with European inscription *Kin ro Teij*. This is all the information afforded by Joly in his article on *Inscriptions on Japanese Sword-fittings* in Vol. XV of these *Transactions*, whence this illustration is taken. Japanese friends with whom I have discussed the matter suggest that the most likely reading is *Kinro-tei* 金露亭 ("Golden Dew Arbour"), which was—and is—a very common *gō* or pen-name amongst people of literary inclination. Possibly the *Kin ro* of the *kodzuka* also stands for *kinrō*, 勤勞, "diligence" or "service," but the first suggestion is by far the most likely. In comparing this example with the foregoing one we note that although the style of handwriting is the same, yet the *Kraan Vogels* appears to have been written with a pen or pencil, whilst the *Kin ro Teij* conveys the impression of having been done with the native *fude* or brush.

Yedo work (?); 18th century.

Formerly in the Behrens Collection.

20. *Fuchi-kashira* in pure red copper (*suaka*), inlaid in silver with the letters EN LIO on the *kashira* and *Fdiwarano Sige Soemi* on the *fuchi*, the latter being signed *Harunari* with *kakihan*, i.e., the celebrated Hirata Harunari (1780-1840), of the Hirata family who were official workers in *shippō* (enamel) to the Shōgun at Tedo. So far as is known, this is the only work of Harunari's showing any Western influence. Comparison of the signature and *kakihan* on the present piece with undoubtedly

genuine examples of Harunari's work now in the Imperial Museum at Uyeno showed that this signature is indisputably genuine—a fact which, for the rest, has already been vouched for by numerous Japanese experts. Taking into consideration the Dutch pronunciation of the early 19th century, the inscriptions appear to be an attempt to render a Japanese name Yenriō Fujiwara no Shigezumi, as we should write it to-day. (The suggestion of "Hidewara" for "Fujiwara" is unlikely.) Who was this Fujiwara no Shigezumi—if he really existed? Some physician or *rangakusha*? Perchance a Nagasaki interpreter, or even a court noble, as the Fujiwara might suggest. [Not, of course, necessarily; compare the Fujiwara attached to the name of Kunishige of Hirado, discussed above, as well as hosts of other clan-names borne honorifically by artists and others.—EDITOR.] He might also have been a pupil of Siebold's (1823-1830), an astronomer, or a fencing-master. All of these have been suggested, but research has so far failed to elicit a definite answer. It is hoped that one will be supplied in due course.

Hirata Harunari of Yedo; prior to 1840.

Author's Collection.

21. Pair of *menuki* in shakudō and shibuichi, with designs in medallions within a beaded rim. That on the left is a copy of a Dutch ducatoon of the so-called *Rijder* type, which depicts a knight in armour brandishing a sword on horseback. Many of these coins were struck in gold and silver in the Netherlands throughout the 17th and 18th centuries—large quantities of the silver ducatoons being imported into Japan in the second half of the latter. This design might have been taken either direct from such a coin or from the reproductions of ducatoons in the *Seiyō Sembū* published at Ōsaka in 1787. This little volume was written by Ōsawa Tōichi, a retainer of Kuchiki Samon, Daimiō of Tamba, and is the illustrated catalogue of the Prince's collection of European coins, the majority of which he had acquired through his friend, the celebrated Isaac Titsingh. The design of the right-hand *menuki* defies identification, the seated figure therein having been variously suggested to be a Portuguese, a Dutchman, a Mongol, and . . . Daikoku! He seems to be holding a *nioi* (*ju-i*) or Buddhist sceptre. Both medallions are covered with gold *numome*. Some experts ascribe these *menuki* to Kunishige of Hirado, others opine they are in Kiōto style.

Kiōto or Hirado work; Temmei period (1781-1787).

Author's Collection.

22. Pair of *menuki* in pure copper, composed of curved ribbons punched with European letters and a flower or a cloud design somewhat resembling those at the ends of the foregoing pair. Unsigned, but obviously, as a cursory glance at the lettering will show, the work of Kunishige of Hirado or his school. Though *tsuba*, and even *fuchi-kashira*, by Kunishige are very common, *menuki* in his style are excessively rare; indeed, this example appears to be unique. See also no. 10.

Kunishige of Hirado; 18th century.

Collection of General J. C. Pabst.

D. The *Goshuim-bune*.

23. Oval iron *tsuba* with beaded edge. The design represents one of the *Goshuim-bune* or Red Seal Ships of the short-lived Japanese mercantile marine of 1600-1635. These vessels were so called from the licences given them to proceed abroad (mostly to Siam and Indo-China) by the early Tokugawa. Similar *tsuba* have been illustrated in the Hawkshaw, Naunton and other catalogues, where they are described as depicting Dutch vessels. But a comparison of this ship with original Japanese paintings of *goshuim-bune* on the one hand and with the Dutch ship shown in no. 11, will prove beyond all reasonable doubt that they represent a Sino-Japanese craft. Note especially the dragon-headed prow, the Chinese-shaped flags, the Oriental nature of the superstructure, and the costumes of the crew, some of whom carry fans, while all are in Oriental dress. The whole of this guard is covered with gold *numome* and the waves are skilfully imbricated and undercut. It will be noticed that the spritsail and foretopsail are of the European type, and in fact all the original Japanese pictures of *goshuim-bune* show that they were rigged in a mixture of Chinese and European style. These modifications were introduced by the Portuguese, and Portuguese marines are often represented amongst the crew in such vessels. Although these ships ceased to exist in consequence of the promulgation of the edict forbidding Japanese to go abroad in 1635, yet pictures and other representations of such vessels are frequently found. They are usually reproduced from the famous pictures of the Kwanyei period (1624-1643) in the Kiyomidzu Temple at Kiōto. The ship of the celebrated Yamada Nagamasa

is another favourite subject; she is shown armed with cannon and rigged on the European plan.

Nagasaki or Kiōto work (*shiiremono*); late 18th century (?).

Author's Collection.

24. Iron *tsuba* resembling the foregoing in design, but of somewhat coarser workmanship. Formerly in the Hawkshaw and Naunton Collections, in the catalogues of which it is figured and described. Another piece, more nearly resembling no. 23, will be found on p. 93 of M. B. Huish's article *Influence of Europe on the Art of Old Japan* in Vol. II of these *Transactions*, and yet another, from the Hildburgh Collection, is in the same museum as the present example.

Nagasaki or Kiōto *shiiremono*; late 18th century.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

25. Iron *tsuba* of same type and design as the two foregoing, but with plain edge. The man on the bottom deck is in Japanese armour, otherwise details are the same as in preceding examples.

Nagasaki or Kiōto *Shiiremono*; late 18th or early 19th century.

Author's Collection.

26. Iron *tsuba*. The ship in this design is more suggestive of Chinese or Siamese vessels; the sails are partly of European and partly of Asiatic type.

Nagasaki work (?); late 18th or early 19th century.

Ashmolean Museum (Church Collection).

E. *Shiiremono*.

We now descend, if not exactly from the sublime to the ridiculous, at least to some guards which serve to show that *Namban tsuba* resemble the little girl who had a little curl right in the middle of her forehead, as when they are good, they are very, very good, and when they are bad, they are horrid! It may be asked whether it is worth while to reproduce pictures of such trash. It is, for two reasons. First, there are not great numbers of such guards in European collections, and collectors who have never been in Japan might quite pardonably imagine that they are far from common. Secondly, they serve to show to what depths the metal-worker could descend in trying to satisfy the popular demand for *Namban* work in the early 19th century, and as such they are a wholesome corrective to people who imagine, like one distinguished "authority" on

Japanese art, that a Japanese "can touch nothing that he does not adorn." (Ye gods!)

27. Mokkō-shaped iron *tsuba* with design of wavy dragons, "Greek fret" or "key" pattern, and some mutilated European or Sanskrit (?) letters at the base. In the catalogue of the Japanese Art Exhibition in aid of the Red Cross held in London in 1915, Joly states that these *tsuba* are far from common. This is certainly not the case in Japan, where I have seen shoals of them, both round and mokkō-shaped. Their precise origin or significance defeats me.

Aidzu *shiiremono* (?); 19th century.

Author's Collection.

28. Iron *tsuba* representing a Dutch ship under sail. Very coarse work, more like a caricature than anything else. Quite commonly found.

Kiōto or Aidzu *shiiremono*; 19th century.

Author's Collection.

29. Shakudō *tsuba*, also representing a Dutch ship, after the same design as the foregoing. A very similar one is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Hildburgh Gift).

Kiōto or Aidzu *shiiremono*; 19th century.

Collection of General J. C. Pabst.

30. Iron *tsuba* representing either a Chinese junk or a *goshuim-bune* of the type previously described in Section D. Details in gold *nunome*. Similar guards are in the Pabst and other collections.

Kiōto *shiiremono*; 19th century.

Author's Collection.

It is hoped that the above notes may be of some use to collectors who are interested in Japanese sword-fittings in general and in *Namban* work in particular. They do not pretend to be complete, nor does this article claim to have said the last word on the subject by any means. I have tried to avoid being too dogmatic in ascribing *tsuba* to this or that period and to this or that school, whilst the conclusions arrived at after careful consideration of all the factors, are, in many cases, tentative only. If this essay will serve to induce both European and Japanese collectors to make public some of their treasures, to enable comparisons to be made between them—the only way by which we can arrive at definite conclusions—then this article will have served its purpose.

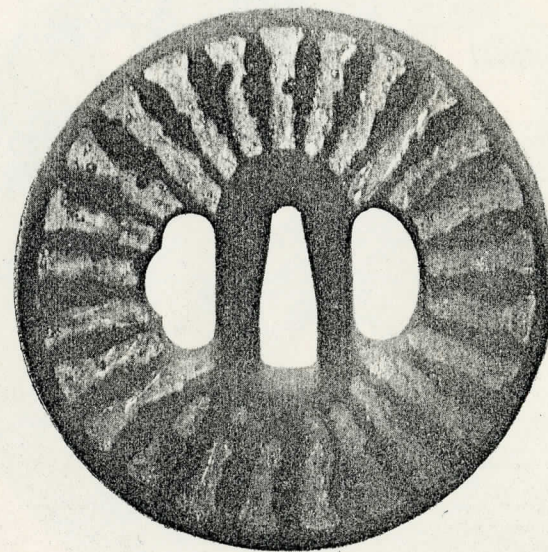
FURTHER NOTE ON NAMBAN IRON.

Since writing the foregoing article, I have had the honour of delivering a lecture on the same subject before the Meiji Japan Society at the *Tōyō Bunko* (Oriental Library) in Tōkiō, and the further pleasure of discussing Namban guards with several Japanese connoisseurs. Amongst the friends I made on that occasion was Mr. Masayuki Sakurai 櫻井正幸, one of the few surviving makers of Japanese sword-blades and an earnest student of sword-lore. He was kind enough to present me with a piece of *Namban-tetsu* of double-gourd shape with long pointed beak, measuring just six inches in length by a fraction over two inches at its greatest breadth, and to give me the following particulars concerning it.

Pieces of *Namban-tetsu* (unworked) are excessively rare. The present one, together with some twenty or thirty others of similar size and shape, came from a box of the Keichō era (1596-1614) which was supposed to have come from Ōsaka Castle. Mr. Sakurai had presented some of these to the Military Museum in Kudan, Tōkiō, and some others to the present writer. So far as he knew, these were all that were in existence in Japan. Shortly afterwards, however, I found that Professor Katsumata of Waseda University likewise owned a piece, which on inspection proved to be of very nearly the same size, shape and weight as the one presented to me. The material is pig-iron, *sentetsu* 銑鐵, which would seem to confirm the remarks quoted from Takekoshi above (p. 156). Another interesting point is that none of the Japanese authorities whom I have consulted, including such *savants* as Professors Kōla, Katsumata, and Mr. Sakurai, have ever seen such inscriptions as *Namban-tetsu wo motte* ("[made] of Namban iron") on *kotō*, i.e., swords made prior to Keichō. This, again, goes far to prove my contentions in the paragraph dealing with materials of manufacture; several *Shintō* blades of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries inscribed in the manner referred to are illustrated in the *Shintō Bengi* and similar works. The fact, however, that the name *Namban* was applied to this iron seems to indicate that it was first introduced by the

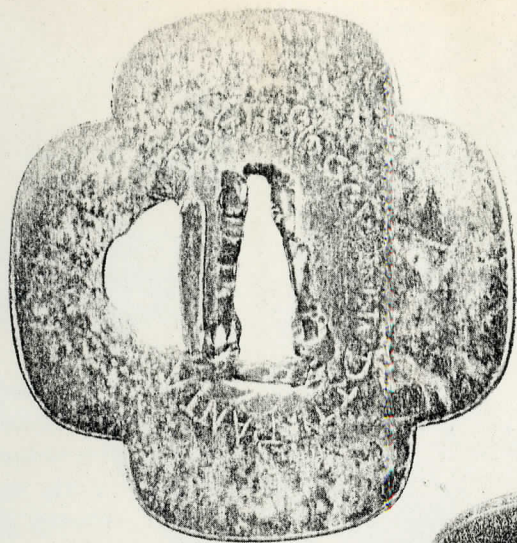


1.

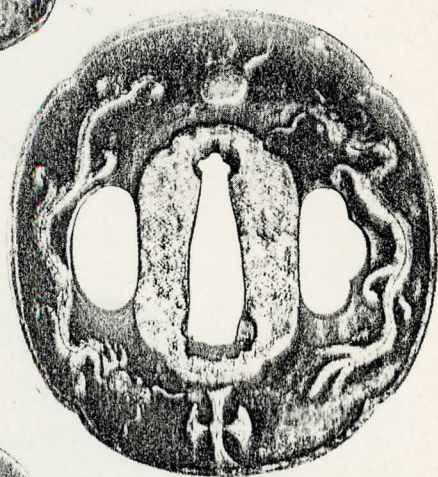


2.

JAPANESE SWORD-FITTINGS SHOWING
FOREIGN INFLUENCE.

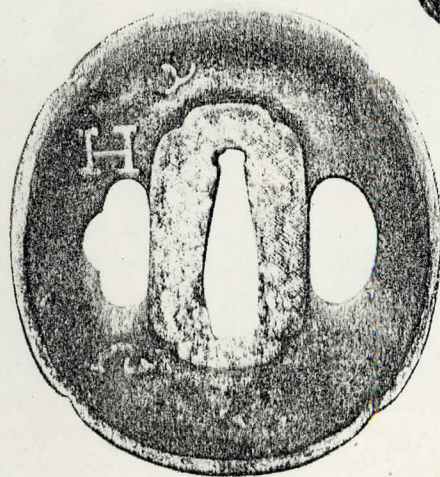


3.



4.

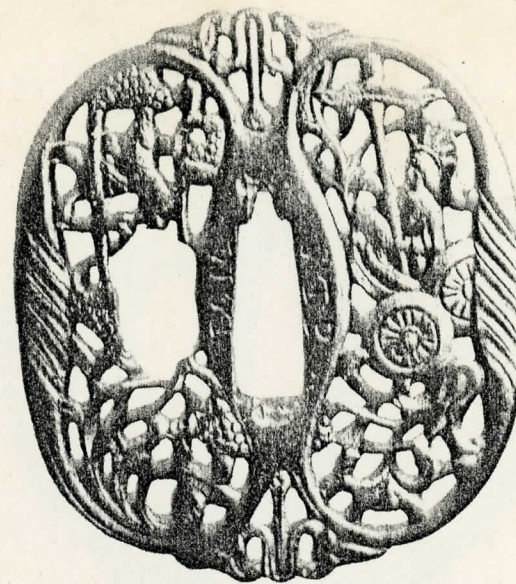
(Obverse.)



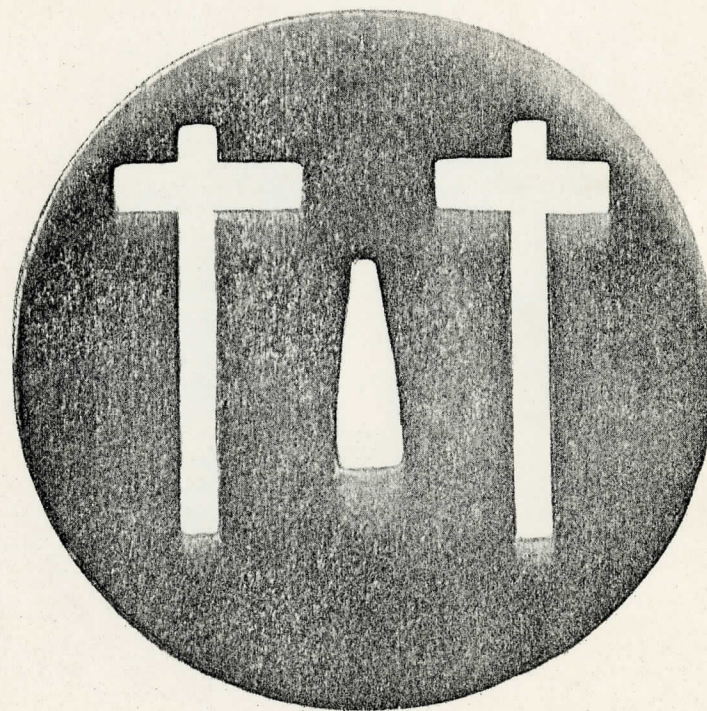
4.

(Reverse.)

JAPANESE SWORD-FITTINGS SHOWING
FOREIGN INFLUENCE.

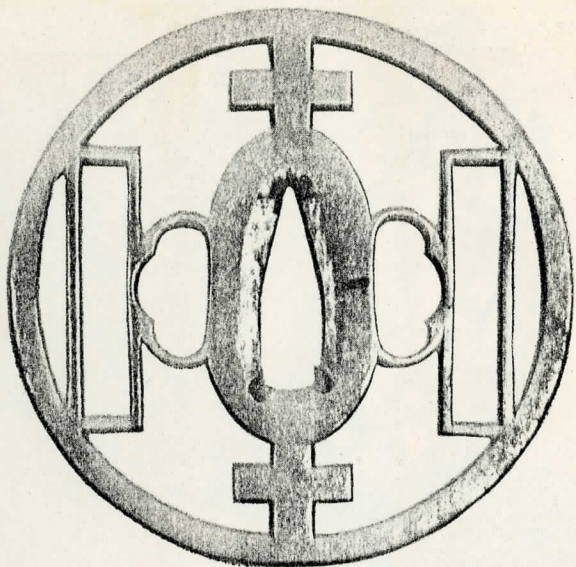


5.



6.

JAPANESE SWORD FITTINGS SHOWING
FOREIGN INFLUENCE.

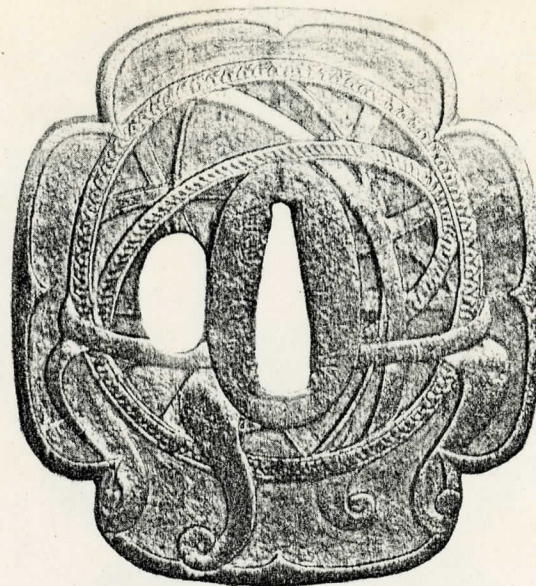


7.



8.

JAPANESE SWORD-FITTINGS SHOWING
FOREIGN INFLUENCE.



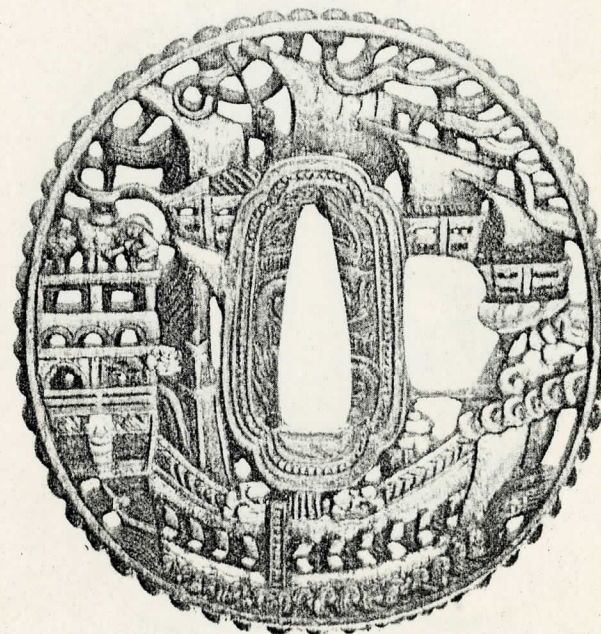
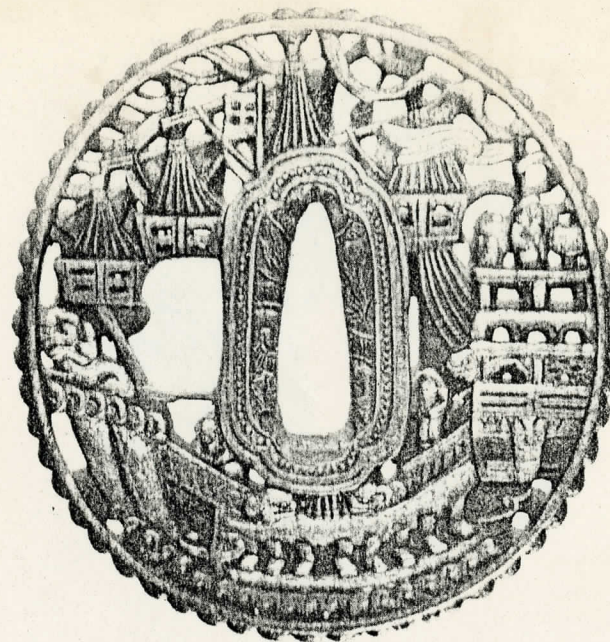
9 (obverse and reverse).
(The original is $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches high.)

JAPANESE SWORD-FITTINGS SHOWING
FOREIGN INFLUENCE.



10.

JAPANESE SWORD FITTINGS SHOWING
FOREIGN INFLUENCE.

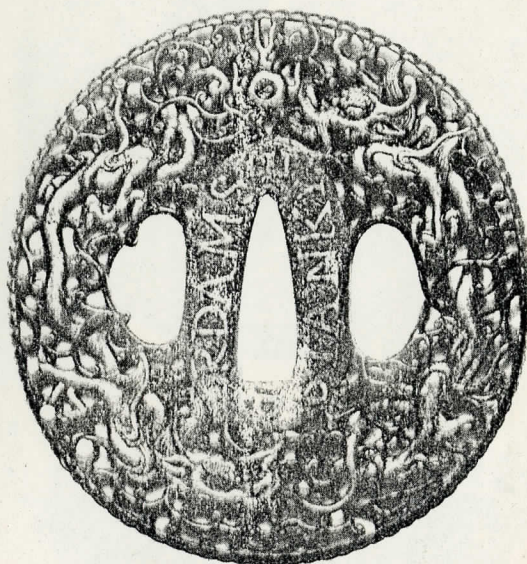


11 (obverse and reverse).

JAPANESE SWORD FITTINGS SHOWING
FOREIGN INFLUENCE.

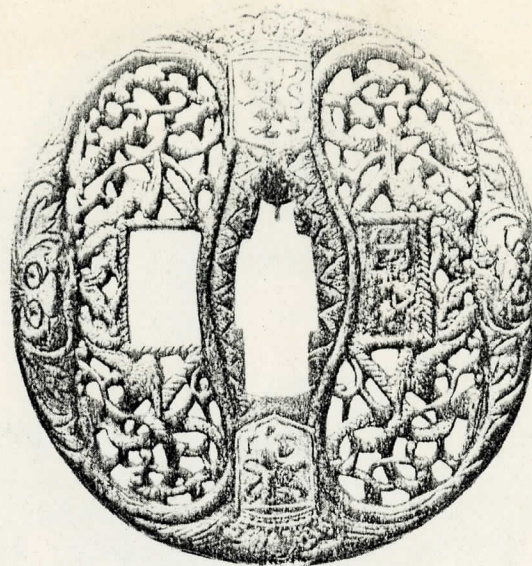


12.



13.

JAPANESE SWORD-FITTINGS SHOWING
FOREIGN INFLUENCE.

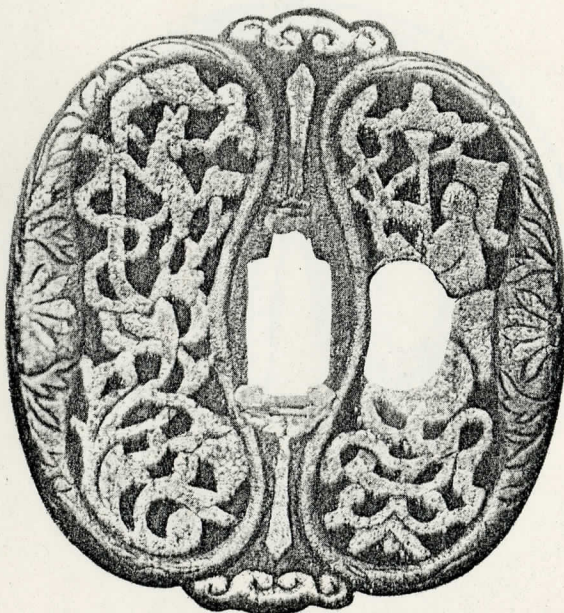
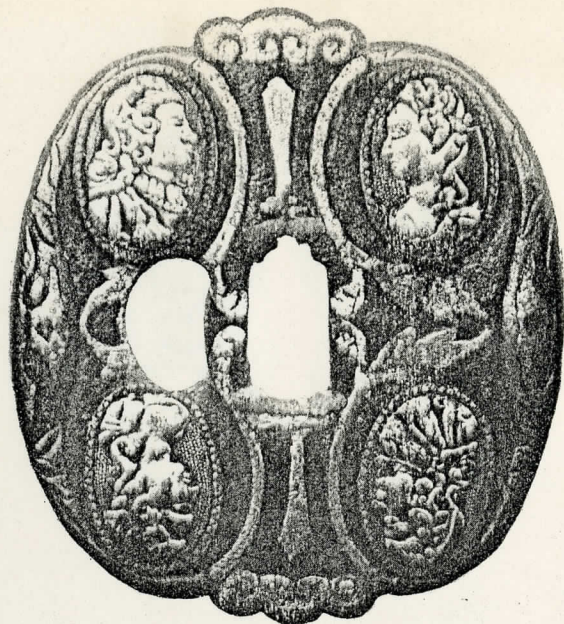


14.



15.

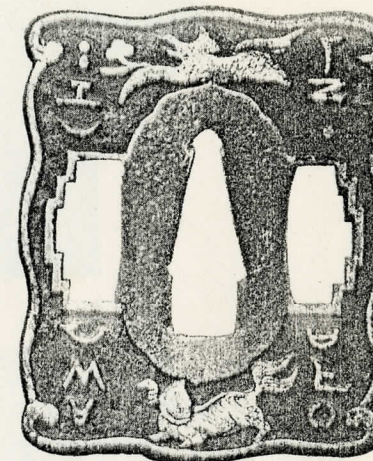
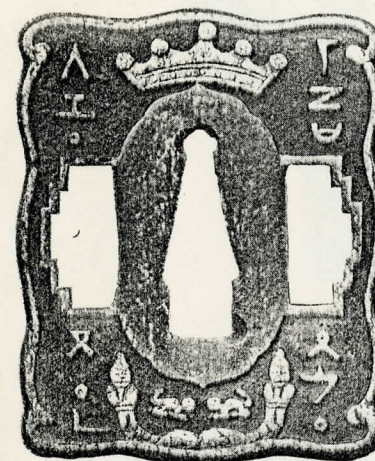
JAPANESE SWORD-FITTINGS SHOWING
FOREIGN INFLUENCE.



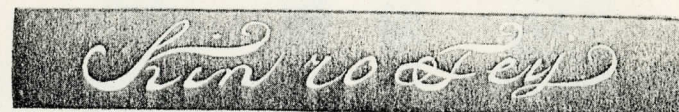
16 (obverse and reverse.)
JAPANESE SWORD FITTINGS SHOWING
FOREIGN INFLUENCE.



18.

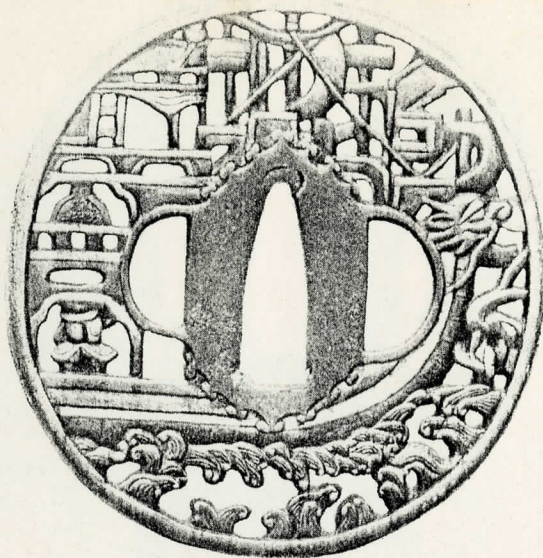


17.

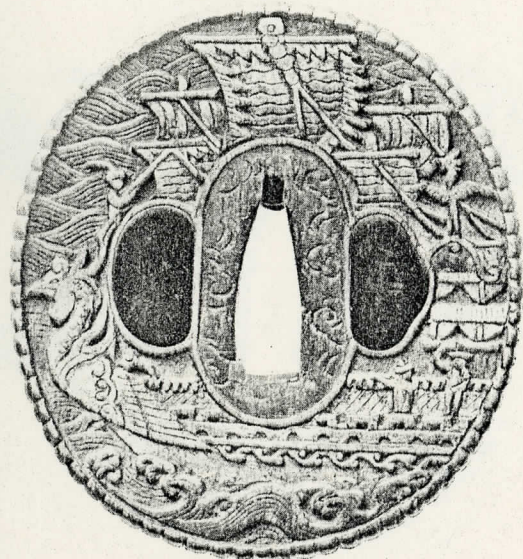


19.

JAPANESE SWORD FITTINGS SHOWING
FOREIGN INFLUENCE.
(All slightly reduced in size.)

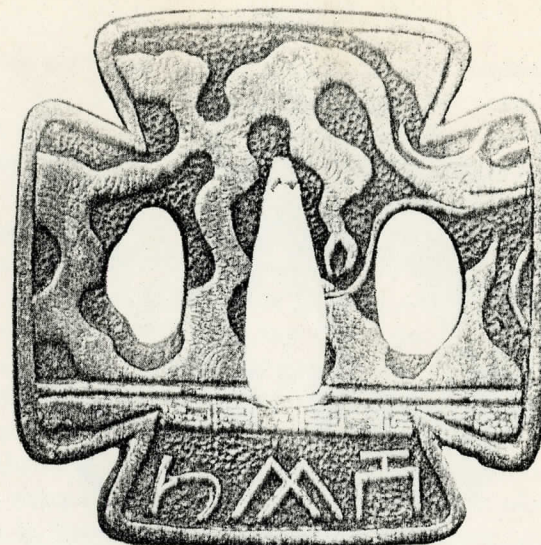


25.

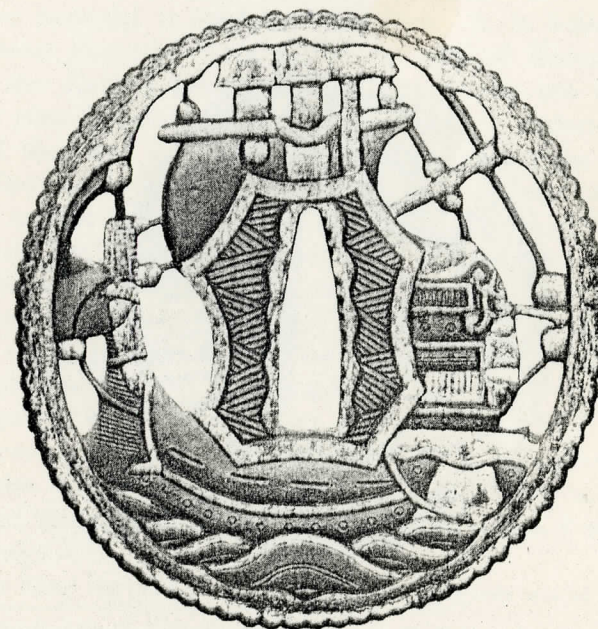


26.

JAPANESE SWORD-FITTINGS SHOWING
FOREIGN INFLUENCE.

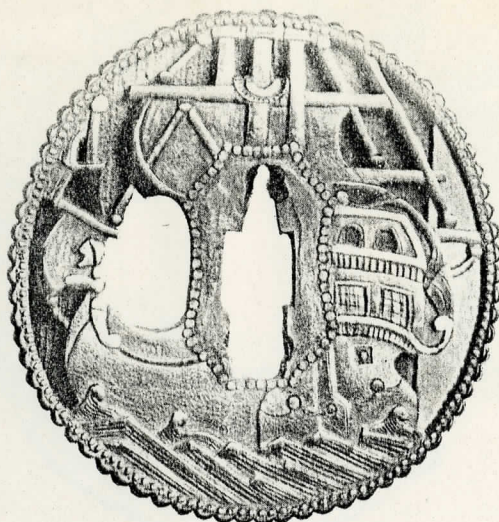


27.

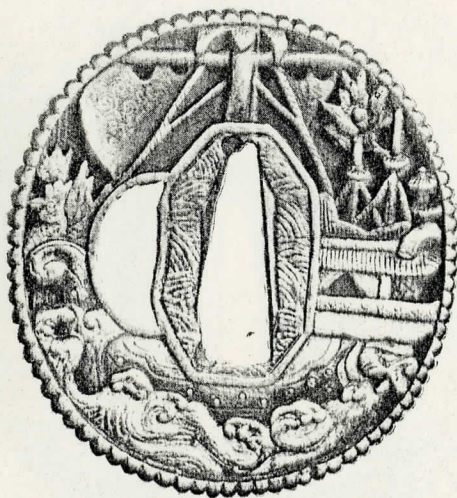


28.

JAPANESE SWORD-FITTINGS SHOWING
FOREIGN INFLUENCE.



29.



30.

JAPANESE SWORD-FITTINGS SHOWING
FOREIGN INFLUENCE.

Portuguese, and not by the Dutch, for materials introduced by the latter almost invariably have the prefix *Oranda* ("Holland").

Finally, the curious gourd shape has aroused much discussion. The popular Japanese explanation is that the iron was imported in this shape to flatter the *Taikō* Hideyoshi, whose favourite device it was. Whether this was really the case or not remains to be proved, and further information on this, as well as on any other point connected with this little-known material, is greatly to be desired.

Mr. Sakurai also presented me with an ingot, of long-oval shape, measuring three inches by one inch and about five-eighths of an inch thick, of the so-called *Go-tetsu* 吳鐵, which is even scarcer than *Namban-tetsu* and about which even less is known and that mostly negative, such as the fact that *katō* blades do not seem ever to have been made of or with it. The *Go* in this case is the old character for China, or more strictly speaking a region thereof (*Wu*), and the material is steel, not pig-iron. It is believed to have been imported from China by way of Korea round about the *Keichō* period, but further details are lacking. In any case it would seem to be a different material from that of the *tsuba* referred to by Joly¹⁷ as bearing the inscription *Namban Go tetsu omoté* (sic, for *wo motte* ?), the character for *Go* in this instance being 五, "five," indicating that the *tsuba* was made from the "five kinds of Namban iron."

Incidentally, steel was frequently imported by the Dutch and English in the seventeenth century. Thus, when the Dutch chief, Jacques Specx, visited the shogunal court for the first time in 1610, he presented Tokugawa Iyeyasu with 200 ingots of steel and Hidetada with 100 pieces.¹⁸ Frequent references to the import of steel, both from England and from the Coromandel Coast in India, are to be found scattered throughout Cocks's *Diary*, from which I cull the following:—

On May 22, 1621, the Dutch and English made a joint

¹⁷ *Introduction à l'Étude des Montures de Sabres* in the *Bulletin* of the Société Franco-Japonaise, 1909, p. 56.

¹⁸ Münsterberg, *Japans Auswärtiger Handel von 1542 bis 1854*, Stuttgart, 1896, p. 175.

presentation which included "1 faggott of steele," to the Daimiō of Satsuma, who was on his way back from Court, and on May 23 the English presented two visiting *Bugiō* or Shogunal Commissioners with "2 faggottes bar steele."¹⁰

Other such instances of presentations of steel to Daimiō and to similar high officials are frequently to be met with, and this steel can only have been used by the recipients in forging swords, so that it would be highly interesting to know whether such bars were called *Namban*, *Go* (呉) or some other kind of *tetsu* by the contemporary Japanese.

¹⁰ I quote from the Japanese edition of 1899 by Dr. Murakami of the Hakluyt Society's version.

OTHER MEETINGS.

ANNUAL BANQUET.

A Banquet was held at the May Fair Hotel on May 7, 1931, in honour of Their Excellencies the Rt. Hon. Sir Francis Lindley, G.C.M.G., C.B., C.B.E., British Ambassador designate to Tōkiō, and the Hon. Lady Lindley, prior to their departure for Japan. The Chair was taken by His Excellency the Japanese Ambassador, *President of the Society*.

After the loyal toasts had been duly honoured, the CHAIRMAN proposed the toast of the Guests of the evening in the following words:—

It is my privilege on behalf of the Japan Society to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Sir Francis Lindley, and Lady Lindley, and to wish them God-speed on their journey to Tōkiō, where Sir Francis will take up his new post as British Ambassador to Japan. Japan has always been singularly fortunate in the ambassadors she has received from this country, and it is a most gratifying circumstance that the able and unremitting efforts of a long line of British representatives have borne their good fruit in the bond of intimate friendship and cordial understanding which unites our two peoples, and which has grown stronger and stronger with the passage of years.

His Excellency Sir John Tilley, whom Sir Francis relieves, and whom we are happy to have amongst us to-night, fully upheld the traditions of his eminent predecessors. During his long term of office in Tōkiō it fell to him to deal with many matters which called for the delicate handling of a seasoned diplomat; but Sir John was always equal to the task, and Lady Tilley was also active in her own domain. Therefore many friends in Japan, both official and private, will long remember with a deep sense of gratitude their unfailing kindness and sterling personalities, which made them such popular and respected figures in my country.

As for Sir John's distinguished successor, it would be superfluous for me now to describe in detail his successful career in His Majesty's Diplomatic Service. Suffice it to mention that the new Ambassador is an old friend of my country. He served as a Secretary in the British Embassy in Tōkiō from 1906 to 1909, and thus is familiar with the Japan of twenty years ago. Twenty years is not a short period, even in the life of a nation; and these last twenty years have witnessed many important and epoch-making events throughout the world. During this interval Japan has undergone a great change; so much so, that when Sir Francis sets foot on my native soil his glance will no doubt fall upon